

1172 PLANNING THE ASSESSMENT

Chapter: **Child Protective Field Services**

Section: **CPS Family Assessments**



New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual

Policy Directive: **17-72**

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Approved:

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director

Related Statute(s): [RSA 169-C](#)

Related Admin Rule(s):

Related Federal Regulation(s):

Related Form(s):

Bridges' Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

Everyone deserves to be safe. The primary goal of the Assessment process is to ensure the safety of the child(ren). Thoughtful planning of a child abuse or neglect Assessment is critical in order to assess any immediate danger to the child/youth and to maximize the safety of the child/youth, other family members, and the CPSW during the Assessment.

Purpose

To describe the process and requirements of assessing referrals of child abuse and neglect.

Definitions

"Assessment" means an investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect completed by a Child Protective Service Worker (CPSW) pursuant to RSA 169-C:34.

"CPSW" or **"Child Protective Service Worker"** means an employee of DCYF who is authorized by the Division to perform functions of the job classification Child Protective Service Worker.

"DCYF" or the **"Division"** means the Department of Health and Human Services' Division for Children, Youth and Families.

"Founded Report" means a report of child abuse and/or neglect where DCYF has made one or more determinations, that there is a preponderance of the evidence for a specific allegation that a child has been abused and/or neglected.

"Unfounded Report" means a report of child abuse and/or neglect for which DCYF finds that there is no preponderance of the evidence to believe the child/youth is abused or neglected.

"Unfounded but with Reasonable Concerns" means a report of child abuse and/or neglect where DCYF has determined that there is probable cause to believe that the child/youth was abused or neglected, but for which there is insufficient evidence to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the child/youth was abused or neglected.

Required Practices

I. The CPSW must:

- A. Identify the assigned response priority level and contact the victim(s) within the required time frames to ensure immediate safety;
- B. Identify all demographics for [parents](#), children/youth, and other household members;

- C. Identify any history DCYF may have with the family;
 - 1. The assigned CPSW must review all available prior Founded, Unfounded, and Unfounded but with Reasonable Concerns reports on the child/youth and family to evaluate their significance to the current Assessment.
 - 2. If there have been two or more prior "Unfounded" or "Unfounded but with Reasonable Concerns" reports involving any family or household member, the Division will conduct an administrative review of all identified reports as noted in II below.
 - 3. The assigned CPSW must check the [Central Registry](#) to see if the alleged perpetrator(s) has a previous founded report with the agency.
 - D. Identify any [medical needs](#) of the victim or other household members; and
 - E. Identify any [additional risks](#) to the CPSW, and steps that can be taken to maintain safety, including assistance from law enforcement when needed.
- II. An administrative review of all identified reports will be conducted when there have been two or more prior "Unfounded" or "Unfounded but with Reasonable Concerns" reports involving any family or household member. These will be conducted through:
- A. A review by a Rapid Safety Feedback Program Specialist;
 - B. An internal case consultation;
 - C. A review by a Supervisor completed through supervision pursuant to [policy 1050](#) section II:B, 4(b); or
 - D. Other: another process identified in consultation with the Supervisor.

Best Practice

- I. The following activities should be completed by the CPSW through planning the Assessment:
 - A. Consult with the local law enforcement agency and the reporter regarding any involvement with the family/household members, and to confirm and obtain any [additional information](#), prior to initiating contact with the family whenever possible;
 - B. Consult with a Supervisor to determine if there is a need to [interview the victim](#) without parental permission;
 - C. Identify the appropriate sequence and location(s) of interviews;
 - D. Identify the Family Developmental Stage(s), and the key tasks and challenges that are inherent to the family's stage(s);
 - E. Identify any previous and current efforts made by the family to ensure safety, as well as supports/strategies utilized or recommended;
 - F. Identify community and family supports. The Genogram tool can be utilized as applicable;

- G. Identify individual and family strengths;
 - H. Identify and consider concerns for [domestic violence](#), substance abuse and mental health for any possible impact on initiating contact with the family;
 - 1. If there is an identified concern, consult with the Family Violence Prevention Specialist, Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC), or mental health consultant as available and applicable to best address the safety and well-being of the family;
 - I. Identify indications that there may be illegal substances in the residence, including but not limited to concerns regarding a [methamphetamine lab](#) and how any risks can be minimized; and
 - J. Identify any needs to consult and/or collaborate with a multidisciplinary team, including but not limited to County Attorney's office, law enforcement, medical professionals, and Child Advocacy Center personnel.
 - K. Identify circumstances that need to be considered, such as:
 - 1. Need for interpreter services;
 - 2. Family Culture; or
 - 3. Any unique circumstances, such as if a family has previously resided in other states.
- II. The CPSW shall prepare to assist families with potential needs by having all necessary tools including but not limited to: tip sheets, information about community resources, ecomap, releases, and brochures to bring to the family prior to meeting with the family.

Practice Guidance

What is an Internal Case Consult?

- An Internal Case Consultation is a process consisting of two (2) or more Division employees reviewing all prior DCYF history with a family and information gained from collateral contacts. During this process staff will identify:
 - Who is in the family and what the family's developmental stages are. This also includes a look at the sequence of events, past findings/determinations, past recommendations, and the family's follow through on past recommendations;
 - The risk level and what is difficult for the family;
 - The family's strengths and skills;
 - The needs of the family and what individual problems family members might have that serve as barriers to resolving the problems in the family; and
 - Any safety plans co-developed with the family (or individual family members).